

CALFED BAY-DELTA PROGRAM

Program Process, September 1995

The CALFED Bay-Delta Program, which began work in spring 1995, directs a three-year process to achieve agreement on long-term solutions in the Bay-Delta system. The following summary reviews the three-phased plan for the CALFED Bay-Delta Program, describes the principles being applied to the CALFED Bay-Delta Program process, and details the Phase 1 portion of the process which will continue through spring 1996. The Program financial strategy and the public involvement program are also summarized.

Process Phases

The CALFED Bay-Delta Program will carry out a three-phased process to achieve broad agreement on comprehensive solutions for the San Francisco Bay-Delta system. The three phases are:

Phase 1: Identification of the Appropriate Range of Solution Alternatives. During Phase 1, the Program will begin with an effort to clearly define the fundamental problems in the Bay-Delta system. The Program will then define the mission, goals and objectives to be addressed, define a range of potential actions to accomplish the objectives, and develop a range of solution alternatives. Phase 1 will be substantially complete in March 1996 with publication of a progress report on alternatives development.

This report will form the basis for selection of a short list of alternatives (discrete sets of actions) to be considered in Phase 2. A Final Alternatives Report identifying the short list of alternatives will be completed in May 1996. Initial environmental scoping for Phase 2 will be done in late 1995 with publication of a Notice of Intent to proceed with environmental review.

Phase 2: Tier 1 EIR/EIS. To comply with the California Environmental Quality Act and the National Environmental Policy Act, the Program will prepare a program level, or first-tier, Environmental Impact Report and Environmental Impact Statement to identify impacts associated with the various alternatives. After a preferred alternative is selected, that set of solution actions will move into the third phase of the process—site specific environmental review.

Phase 3: Tier 2 Environmental Documentation. This phase includes preparation of specific, or second-tier, environmental documents for all specific actions which comprise the selected alternative. This phase may entail the development of multiple environmental documents necessary to implement a multi-objective solution strategy.

Process Principles

The eventual success of this effort to develop a lasting solution for the Bay-Delta system will depend

on the full and equal involvement of all interested parties in a collaborative process. The Program must produce a broadly-accepted set of solutions which can be implemented. In order to achieve this goal, the CALFED Bay-Delta Program staff identified a set of principles to guide the solution-finding process.

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The CALFED Bay-Delta Program

The CALFED Bay-Delta Program is a joint state-federal effort to develop long-term solutions to problems of the Sacramento/San Joaquin Bay-Delta system. The solution-finding effort focuses on ecosystem quality, water supply reliability, water quality, and vulnerability of Delta levees and channels to natural disasters. The program will recommend by spring 1996 a set of solution alternatives to undergo subsequent detailed analysis in the environmental review process.

The process must be open and innovative.

Developing a workable, long-term solution for the Bay-Delta system requires both the involvement and support of all people representing all viewpoints. Both open dialogue and open minds are key to the success of this effort. Because this effort aims to combine and coordinate the many different interests and perspectives on the Bay-Delta, a broad vision with new thinking will be needed.

Creativity and innovation are necessary to develop a long-term, integrated solution.

The process must build upon past work.

Previous planning efforts such as the San Francisco Estuary Project and the Bay Delta Oversight Council have done significant work in defining the problems in the Bay-Delta system. The CALFED process must use this earlier work and recast it in the context of new conditions (such as the Central Valley Project Improvement Act) to develop a lasting solution. Much existing information is available and will be used in this effort.

The process must develop actions and alternatives that address the fundamental problems in the Bay-Delta system.

Many different groups and interests have identified both problems and solutions for the Bay-Delta system. Generally, these ideas tend to reflect each group's individual perspectives. While each perspective may have merit, a multi-objective, long-term solution must be based on the major problems that affect the Bay-Delta system as a whole. Developing a Bay-Delta solution that addresses fundamental problems of the Bay-Delta system in a comprehensive manner is essential.

The process must measure the performance of alternatives against the problems and objectives that are most important to the vitality of the Bay-Delta system.

The quality of an alternative must be measured by the ability of that alternative to solve problems and meet objectives, not by whether it includes particular actions or satisfies a specific interest.

Both the process and the resultant solutions should be of manageable scope.

Developing a set of solution alternatives by spring 1996 is an ambitious schedule. While actions taken toward finding a long-term, coordinated solution for the Bay-Delta system may be unprecedented, the solutions developed through the process must focus on a manageable set of problems. A landmark cooperative solution that cannot be implemented is not a solution.

Phase 1 Process

The proposed process has been designed to identify a suite of alternative sets of actions which will improve the Bay-Delta system. The

process allows for equal involvement among all interest groups, supports open communication and innovative thinking, and fosters consensus and cooperation. It aims to incorporate much of the existing information we already have about the system and also incorporate various view points. The alternatives which will be the products for Phase 1 will combine different actions to provide integrated solutions reflecting a variety of concerns and ideas and which ultimately ensure the health and productivity of the Bay-Delta system.

At the heart of the process of Phase 1 is a step-by-step development cycle. Each step of Phase 1 will be based on input from the staff and management of the CALFED agencies, input from a public workshop, input from the Bay-Delta Advisory Council meetings, involvement of many interest groups, and public outreach. The process for Phase 1 is divided into the following steps:

Step 1: Defining the Problem
The first step of the solution-finding process is defining the problem,

mission, and objectives for the four main Bay-Delta issue areas:

Ecosystem Quality

Water Quality

Water Supply

System Vulnerability

The products developed in this step will help to guide the later development of actions to address the problems. The process begins with tasks designed to develop general agreement on the definitions of the problems facing the Bay-Delta system through a series of workshops and interim work products.

Step 2: Preliminary Objectives, Mission, Scope Objectives are developed which describe conditions to be achieved. The objectives contain increasing levels of detail, starting with the Program mission statement and culminating with performance measures that can be used to evaluate actions and alternatives.

Step 3: Identifying Potential Actions The process proceeds with the identification of specific actions (res-

tortations, policies, operational changes, structures) which could become part of the alternatives to achieve improvements in the Bay-Delta system. Hundreds of specific actions have already been identified through previous Bay-Delta investigations. These actions, and newly identified actions, will be grouped together and organized in ways which will facilitate the remaining steps in Phase 1.

Step 4: Crafting Solution Strategies Coherent strategies for achieving the Program's objectives will be developed from the mission, problems and objectives to serve as a guide in assembling discrete actions into comprehensive alternatives.

Step 5: Developing Alternatives Preliminary alternatives will be drafted to achieve desired results established as part of the mission and objectives setting process. Each preliminary alternative will be evaluated against the performance measures. Recognizing that only a rough evaluation is needed at this point, the impact analysis will be based on existing information, public input,

and expert judgement.

Step 6: Refining Alternatives Based on the results of analysis, alternatives will be improved and retested. A short list of preliminary alternatives will be selected for further consideration in subsequent environmental documentation of the CALFED Bay-Delta Program. The short list of alternatives will include a no-action alternative and a range of alternatives to be carried into Phase 2.

Public Outreach During Phase 1

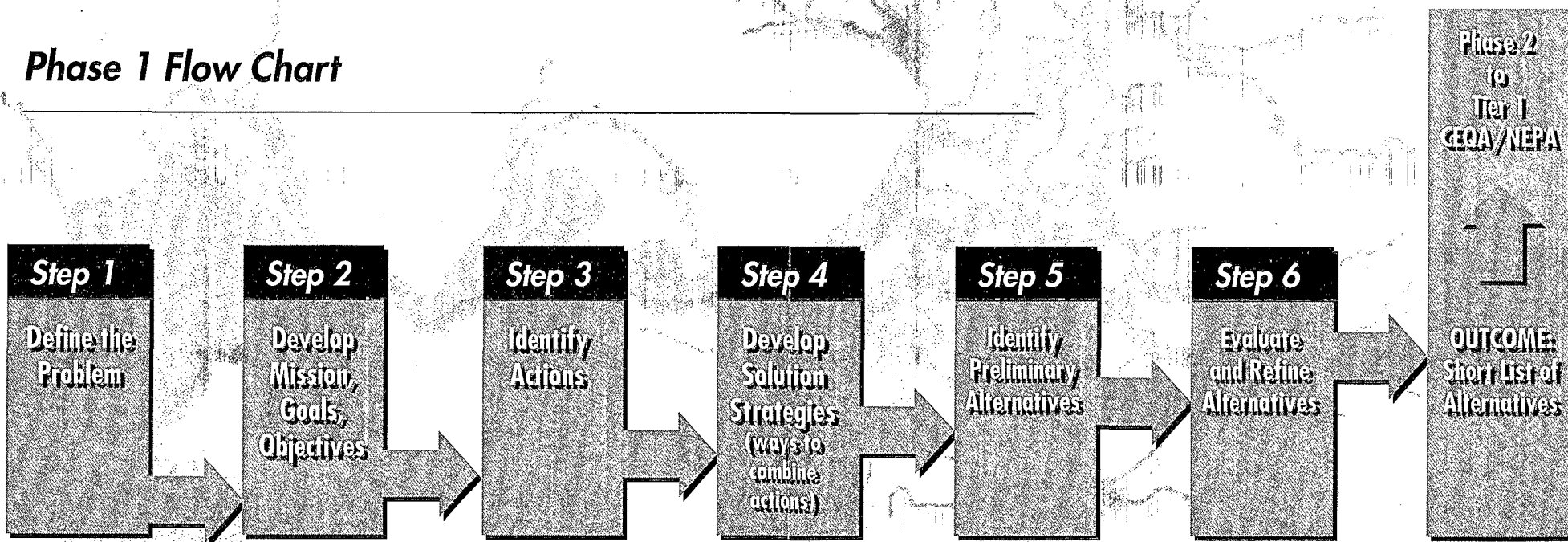
The CALFED Bay-Delta Program is committed to implementing this planning process with the active participation and genuine involvement of all Bay-Delta interested parties. Only through meaningful involvement can we develop alternatives that are responsive to public concerns. Meetings of the Bay Delta Advisory Council and monthly public workshops are key elements of the Phase 1 solution-finding process. These regularly scheduled events are designed as working sessions that bring together people with many different views to review in detail the problems of the Bay-Delta, and to assist in the development of a set of solution alternatives that will undergo subsequent detailed analysis. As the process unfolds, each agreement will build on previous agreements, culminating in a short list of alternatives with broad support and acceptance.

The workshops will provide an opportunity for the various groups to hear different perspectives and explore comprehensive solutions, encouraging and supporting the broad collaborative process that is critical to the success of this effort.

Public meetings are also scheduled throughout Phase 1 to explain the program and to receive input, concerns and ideas.

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Phase 1 Flow Chart



The Financial Strategy

A draft financial strategy will be developed to cover the range of potential capital and annual costs as well as potential funding sources and cost-sharing agreements. The financial feasibility analysis will be conducted initially on the preliminary set of alternatives and refined as the set of alternatives is refined.

Where We Are Headed: Outline of Phase 2 and Phase 3 of the CALFED Bay-Delta Program.

Phase 2 A program EIS/EIR will be completed focusing on broad policy and resource allocation decisions that are required to implement the program. Due to the gen-

eral nature of this type of an EIS/EIR, the process will be more conceptual than a project specific environmental document. Similarly, the document will have a more general discussion of impacts, alternatives and mitigation measures. The primary purpose of this document will be to inform decision-makers about the environmental dimensions, particularly the interrelated and cumulative consequences, of the alternatives. The document will lead to the selection of a comprehensive and balanced plan which addresses all of the resource problems identified as concerns of the Program.

Phase 3 The objective of this Phase will be to provide environmental information on specific actions of the comprehensive and bal-

anced plan in order to make informed decisions about the alternative courses of action for meeting each specific project purpose. The documents in this Phase will include a series of project-specific environmental documents ranging from categorical exemptions/exclusions, to negative declarations/environmental assessments to environmental impact reports/environmental impact statements.



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